

The Performance of the LGBT Space, unit I, João Pessoa - Paraíba, as an articulating body of protection and support to the LGBT+ population

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Received: 12 Dec 2020;

Received in revised form:

21 Jan 2021;

Accepted: 11 Feb 2021;

Available online: 25 Feb 2021

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Keywords— Public Policy, LGBT phobia,
citizenship, empowerment.

Abstract — In this article, we intended to bring a brief discussion about the State Center for Reference of LGBT Rights and Confrontation with LGBTphobia of Paraíba, also known as LGBT Space - Unit I (João Pessoa - Paraíba). The applied methodology was qualitative, through bibliographic, documentary and field research in order to clear the institutional conjuncture that allowed the creation of the organ under study, its competencies and main results achieved over almost ten years of implementation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The LGBT Space (João Pessoa), a state agency created on May 25, 2011, is the result of an agreement with the Federal Government. Its constitution stems from numerous demands of the local LGBT+ Movement, presented especially at public policy and human rights conferences for the LGBT+ population.

It should be highlighted that the Brazil Without Homophobia Program, launched in 2004 by the Secretariat of Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic, was the first milestone of state awareness, at the federal level, to promote the citizenship of the segment. In this sense, it should be emphasized that the creation of instances such as LGBT Space - Unit I (João Pessoa - Paraíba), arises from this scenario.

Linked to the Secretariat for Women and Human Diversity (SEMDH-PB)^[1], also created in 2011, the LGBT Space - Unit I integrates another of the structures of Paraíba for assistance of this population, which also has the Comprehensive Health Outpatient Clinic for Transvestites and Transsexuals of Paraíba - Outpatient Clinic TT, the Coordination of Women's Rights, Sexual Diversity and Human Rights of the Public Defender's Office of the State and the Specialized Police Station against LGBTfóbicos, Racial crimes and Religious Intolerance - DECHRADI/PB.

The institutional mission propagated by the LGBT Space Unit I is to be an instantiation that advocates the citizenship and human rights of LGBTQIA+, as well as, coping with LGBTphobia, discrimination by sexual orientation and gender identity.

It also proposes to articulate the services and social actors, governmental and non-governmental, to form a network of protection and guarantee of the rights of LGBT+ people, which qualifies the care of this population and develops strategies of intersectoral actions to combat LGBTphobia and all forms of violations of rights of this public. (PARAÍBA, SEMDH, 2009).

II. METHODOLOGY

This study has a qualitative approach and adopted bibliographic, documentary and field research by methods. It should be highlighted that most of the information collected was obtained directly at the LGBT Space - Unit I, located at Street Princes Izabel, 164, João Pessoa/PB, which allowed direct consultation of the agency's records, which constituted, as a result, primary sources of research.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Soares and Schultz (2019), Espaço LGBT (João Pessoa) was the first public equipment and assistance to the segment created by the state of Paraíba. Specifically regarding Unit I, the authors say that their actions unfold beyond the capital, reaching other municipalities in the interior of the state where LGBT+ people are in a situation of discrimination and violence. In addition to legal and psychosocial support, the instantiation aims to facilitate the segment's access to citizenship. In addition, SEMDH/PB (2019, not paged) highlights:

The LGBT Space is one of promoting the citizenship and human rights of LGBTQIA+, as well as coping with LGBTphobia, discrimination by sexual orientation and gender identity. One of its actions is to articulate the services and social actors, governmental and non-governmental, to a network of protection and guarantee of LGBTQIA+ rights. The network aims to qualify the care of the population and develop strategies of intersectoral actions to combat LGBTphobia and all forms of violations of law.

Melo (2020, p. 180), citing Soares and Schultz (2019), mentions how some of the actions promoted by Espaço LGBT:

the monitoring of cases in various areas of law, such as the criminal and civil sphere, cases of adoption by LGBT+ people, access to social security benefits, psychological

follow-up, including for family members of LGBT+ people, as well as focus groups for transvestites and transsexuals, assistance in obtaining basic documentation, referral to health services, among others.

It should be highlighted that, according to Melo (2020) some of the services provided by Espaço LGBT also reach family members and friends of LGBT+ people, since many of the situations of vulnerability and discrimination affect people who are not part of this population, but who are associated with it, either by the degree of kinship or by other social ties.

According to the disclosure carried out on the institutional website of the state of Paraíba (2019), the services offered by Espaço LGBT are of a legal nature, psychological support, social service and human rights, besides having an LGBTQI+ library open to the public.

According to Azevedo et al, (2019), the services provided by Espaço LGBT (João Pessoa) allow access to the meeting space and exchanges of experience between family members who are experiencing the transition and preparatory processes for performing sexual reassignment surgery.

In addition to the attendances mentioned, it should be emphasized that the agency also conducts lectures, workshops, seminars and dialogue scans with a view to promoting and strengthening LGBT+ citizenship.

The relevance of its performance is affirmed from the analysis of the reality of the segment, which is historically the victim of violence, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion, commonly also affected by low schooling (NASCIMENTO and FRANCH, 2018).

The reality of the state of Paraíba, which statistically stands out in the national and regional scenario as one of the states with the highest rates of deaths of LGBT+ people, as well as complaints about the practice of discriminatory acts against this population (MELO, 2020) cannot be observed.

One of the strategies used by Espaço LGBT, as Silva (2019) points out, is the interaction and dissemination of services through social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter.

In this sense, at the time of its inauguration was held a virtual poll for the choice of the mascot of the organ, having been elected a multicolored chameleon named Iguaraíba, in a direct reference to the main international symbol of LGBT struggle, the rainbow flag.



Fig. 1: Chameleon Iguaraíba (mascot of LGBT Space - João Pessoa)

Source: LGBT Space Profile on facebook (2020)¹

According to Côrtes *et al.* (2019, p. 428), the LGBT Space (João Pessoa):

(...) promotes access to services of the Judiciary to rectify the first name of transvestites and transsexuals in the civil registry, with psychological advice, guidance on the process, issuance of negative certificates and guidance after the process yoked and granted" in its legal sector.

In addition, the predominant profile of users of the LGBT Space, verified from the analyses of Nascimento and Franch (2018), has female gender identity (lesbian, bisexual, transvestite and transsexual), black race/ethnicity, age between 18 (eighteen) and 29 (twenty-nine) years, schooling up to high school and income less than or equal to a minimum wage.

IV. ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

From the data collected from the LGBT Space – João Pessoa, as well as with the bibliography and available documents, it was found that until October 2019 the LGBT Space, performed 22,901 (twenty-two thousand) visits and registered 1,501 users, mostly from the younger population, from 18 to 29 years and with female gender identity.

It should be highlighted that the main provoking facts of the agency's performance are linked to the non-framing of users of the LGBT Space to a normative sexuality, that is, heterosexual and cisgender, which often makes them targets of episodes of discrimination, physical,

psychological, verbal or symbolic violence, omissions and intolerance.

It is observed that the physical and psychological violence practiced by the victims' own relatives is the main complaint of care, followed by the reports of institutional LGBTphobia.

It was found that in addition to guidance and direct interventions carried out by the LGBT Space (João Pessoa), as indicated for each case, the agency also promotes educational and sensitizing actions, in addition to events for the dissemination of services and reach of the target population (PARAÍBA, 2020)².

V. CONCLUSION

The present study allowed a brief description of the institutionalization and performance of one of the most important governmental institutions for the assistance of the LGBT+ population in Paraíba, the LGBT Space, located in the capital of Paraíba.

It is verified that the implementation of the agency is not the result of mere state initiative, but of the action of a strong local militancy, aligned with movements of national character, especially in the last two decades.

The LGBT Space (João Pessoa), currently one of the main articulating instances of public policies aimed at the LGBT+ segment in Paraíba, with technical staff and material that throughout its almost 10 years of existence, has allowed the realization of a relevant amount of care for the reception and direction of the demands of people vulnerable due to LGBTphobia.

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